



## *The President's Daily Brief*

*26 October 1970*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

More Communist forces from South Vietnam are being deployed to southern Laos, apparently to improve security along the infiltration corridor. (Page 1)

A recent defector has provided information on the Communists' problems in Cambodia and their uncertainties about capitalizing on a political settlement in South Vietnam. (Page 2)

In Czechoslovakia, a firm decision appears to have been made to discontinue political trials. (Page 3)

In Chile, a major effort is under way to apprehend those responsible for the assassination of General Schneider. (Page 4)

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### Communist Troop Deployment Away From South Vietnam



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## VIETNAM-LAOS

Recent intercepts indicate that one and possibly two infantry regiments are being sent to southern Laos from the B-3 Front, the Communist command in the western highlands of South Vietnam. Part of the 28th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment was near Attapeu on 23 October, well outside the B-3 Front's usual area of operations. Other intercepts suggest that the 66th Regiment from the same command also is moving, but its destination is unknown. Another B-3 Front regiment was moved into Cambodia in early summer in support of the Communist effort around Stung Treng.

*The transfer of regiments from the western highlands increases further the manpower buildup in the panhandle. Since early summer two or possibly three infantry regiments have moved, or are in the process of moving, into this area from North Vietnam. Elements of the 2nd NVA Division normally based in northern South Vietnam have been stationed in the Tchepone area since mid-summer. At least 10,000 other men have been sent to southern Laos through the infiltration system.*

*The movement of regiments from the B-3 Front reduces the immediate military threat to South Vietnam's western highlands and may have left the B-3 Front with only two of the five North Vietnamese regiments it normally has on hand. Hanoi's willingness to draw off forces from South Vietnam to help its buildup in southern Laos underlines again the high priority the Communists attach to improving security for their supply and infiltration system through the panhandle.*

## FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

## VIETNAM-CAMBODIA

A former COSVN staff officer who defected last month says that a tightly-held portion of a new COSVN directive alleges that it would be "easy" to overthrow the Lon Nol government by military means but that the Communist movement in Cambodia is not strong enough to form an effective or lasting government. Vietnamese Communist units have been forced to help the Cambodians organize already liberated areas. The directive, [redacted] said by the defector to have been issued in August, indicates that additional assets will be taken out of South Vietnam for work in Cambodia and suggests that local commanders in South Vietnam will have to fend increasingly for themselves.

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*The claim that local commanders are being asked to fend for themselves fits neatly with other evidence that self-sufficiency is the current watchword for many Communist forces in South Vietnam. The directive implies, in effect, that cadre should wage a holding action even though there was some rhetoric calling for more and stronger military attacks.*

The official also told of a briefing of high-level cadre which stressed the need for the Communists in South Vietnam to gird for a political settlement. Briefers said that the withdrawal of US forces and the setting up of a coalition government excluding the present South Vietnam Government leadership would not automatically lead to a Communist takeover. They stressed the strength of anti-Communist forces and organizations in the South, in particular the present government apparatus, and underlined the morale problems cadre would face as they were exposed to the material comforts of peacetime after years of military struggle. The US, it was said, would use economic aid to "create the impression of prosperity." This might confuse and demoralize cadre, undermining their willingness to persist in the struggle.

*This testimony does not suggest that the Communists anticipate an early political settlement or that they are prepared to modify their tough public demands to get one. But it does indicate that in their private councils, Communist leaders are sometimes less than confident about their long-term prospects and about the staying power of their own forces.*

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Our Embassy in Prague reports that a firm decision appears to have been made to discontinue political trials, judging from the "categorical" statement to that effect by a government official coupled with the release of the last two defendants. The editor of the party daily Rude Pravo has been quoted as stating that even the strongly pro-Dubcek Pachman group will not be brought to trial, lest martyrs be created.

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At the same time, hardliner Josef Groessner has been removed as Czech state interior minister, according to an official announcement. A supporter of tough measures against the liberal activists of 1968, Groessner was replaced by a virtually unknown party functionary.

*Husak probably would not have attempted such moves unless he felt relatively secure. If he can continue to weaken the position of his hard-line opponents, prospects for the success of his moderate course will improve significantly.*

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NOTES

Chile: With the election of Salvador Allende as president Saturday under strict security measures, a major effort is under way to apprehend those responsible for the murder of army commander Schneider, who died yesterday. The plot now appears to have been of right-wing origin. Several dozen arrests have been made but the chief investigator believes the full ramifications of the plot will not be fully determined until long after Allende's inauguration next week.

Laos: There was little military activity over the weekend. In the north, government forces encountered only light opposition as they captured two more tactical positions in the territory southwest of the Plaine des Jarres. Intercepts continue to indicate that the North Vietnamese are preparing for a counterattack, which will initially be directed at Phou Seu Mountain on the edge of the Plaine.

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